

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 15 September 2022

by K E Down MA(Oxon) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 22nd September 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/Z5060/D/22/3303719
125 Porters Avenue, Dagenham, RM9 5YU

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr Perparim Bucpapaj against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Barking & Dagenham.
 - The application Ref 22/00729/HSE, dated 26 April 2022, was refused by notice dated 20 June 2022.
 - The development proposed is erection of a single storey front and first floor rear extension, rear dormer to facilitate loft accommodation and internal alterations.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. There is one main issue which is the effect of the proposed first floor rear extension and rear dormer on the character and appearance of the host dwelling, the adjoining terrace and the surrounding area, including the Becontree Estate.

Reasons

3. The appeal dwelling is in the middle house of a terrace of three. It sits in a prominent location on a main route through the Becontree Estate, an interwar development of "Homes for Heroes" which was the largest estate of its kind in the world. The estate has heritage value for historical and communal/social reasons owing to its purpose and place in history. Although much of the architecture is functional some is aesthetically pleasing and this adds to the heritage value. Whilst not a Conservation Area, the Becontree Estate is a non-designated local heritage asset of some significance.
 4. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that the effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account. A balanced judgement is required, having regard to the scale of any harm and the significance of the heritage asset.
 5. The appeal dwelling and its adjoining neighbours are an example of a group with aesthetic value, being unusual in the context of the estate and attractive in
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form with some detailing and pleasing symmetry. In particular, they give the effect of the appeal dwelling being “book-ended” by the end dwellings which project in front of and behind its front and rear elevations respectively. This effect is emphasised at roof level by the front facing gables and rear facing projecting hips.

6. The proposed extensions include a front porch. The Council raises no objection to this and I agree it would be of a scale and design that would maintain the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the terrace. I shall therefore limit my further considerations to the proposed rear extensions, including the roof dormer.
7. Permission has been granted under permitted development rights for a 6m deep single storey rear extension, which was under construction at the time of my site visit, and for a box dormer. Both extensions occupy almost the full width of the dwelling. Nevertheless, they preserve the “book-ended” effect because the first floor would remain set back from the two end dwellings and the dormer would sit within the existing roof slope, so the projecting hips would remain distinct.
8. The proposed rear first floor extension would be modest in depth but would result in the appeal dwelling having a rear elevation that projected as far back as the rear elevations of the end dwellings. The proposed dormer would project over this extension, resulting in a deeper and more prominent structure. In consequence the “book-ended” effect would be diminished because the step in the rear elevations would be lost and, due to its vertical face, the dormer would stand out between the currently projecting hips, making it the most dominant feature at roof level.
9. The appellant suggests that because the extensions would be to the rear and not seen in the street scene the changes would not be materially detrimental. However, they would be clearly visible from surrounding dwellings and would harm the characteristic “H” pattern of the original footprint of the terrace, noticeably detracting from its appearance and heritage significance.
10. The appellant notes that other nearby terraces have aligned rear elevations and that the appeal dwelling and its neighbours are unusual in the area, with only one similar terrace a short distance away on Porters Avenue. That may be so but this, to my mind, enhances the value of the appeal dwelling and its adjoining neighbours since it is clear from the rear that this terrace is different and not common in the vicinity, hence increasing its importance.
11. The appellant further notes that the similar dwelling at No 103 has been extended to the rear at first floor. However, there is no roof extension in this case and the roof form over the modest extension mimics but is of smaller scale than and subservient to the original hipped roofs of the end dwellings. The original “book-end” effect is thus preserved despite the noticeable alterations. It is therefore not readily comparable with the appeal proposals.
12. Finally, my attention is drawn to other large box dormers on other dwellings nearby. However, those that I saw were contained within the roof slope of the host dwelling and therefore, whilst large, did not detract from the appearance of the rear façades. Moreover, they were on more modest dwellings which did not

have the characteristic “H” pattern of the appeal dwelling and its adjoining neighbours. I do not therefore find them comparable with the appeal proposals.

13. It is concluded on the main issue that whilst the proposed front porch would be acceptable, the proposed first floor rear extension and rear dormer would have a materially detrimental effect on the character and appearance of the host dwelling, the terrace of which it forms a part and the surrounding area. Moreover, owing to the distinctive character and appearance of the host terrace, it would materially detract from the significance of the Becontree Estate which is a non-designated local heritage asset.
14. In consequence, taken in the context of more strategic policies in The London Plan, 2021, and the Council’s Core Strategy, 2010, the proposed first floor rear extension and rear dormer would conflict with Policies BP2, BP8 and BP11 of the Borough Wide Development Policies Development Plan Document, 2011, and with the NPPF. Taken together these expect new development, including extensions, to be visually attractive as a result of good architecture; sympathetic to local character and history so as to help create a sense of local identity, distinctiveness and place; and to respect the local context of non-designated heritage assets and avoid materially detracting from their significance. They would also conflict with emerging policies in the Draft Local Plan 2037 which seek to ensure similar protection.
15. For the reasons set out above and having regard to all other matters raised, including the lack of any detrimental effect on the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

KE Down
INSPECTOR